

THE REV. PREB. D. J. PRING, M.A.

Dawkes and Partridge, Photographers, Wells

Rev. Preb. D. J. Pring, M.A.

(Plate XVIII)

Prebendary Daniel James Pring, born 30 January 1860, was educated at the old Taunton Grammar School, Exeter College Oxford, and Wells Theological College. Ordained deacon in 1883, he spent forty-five years of ministerial life in the diocese of Bath and Wells—at Cheddar, Wilton and North Curry ; and retired in 1928, to The Lawn, Ilminster, where he died 9 May 1936.

Following a natural bent for antiquities, he joined the Society in 1880, and served on the Council from 1892 to 1912, and, again, from 1920 to 1936. From 1918 to 1928 he was a local secretary of the society. Interested in natural history, and, in particular, no mean botanist, he was for many years associated with the Taunton Field Club, and, in addition to this, on the committee of the Ornithological Section for a few years before and up to the time of his death.

His literary powers were not inconsiderable ; and he had a real gift for writing in a style which was simple, direct and natural. Though his treatment of antiquarian subjects was popular rather than strictly scientific, and somewhat that of an earlier day, once he had hit on a theory he collected and marshalled his facts with patient research, and wove them into a pleasant pattern as the theory directed. Hence his small books about the antiquities of Somerset are marked by a facile treatment of subject matter—the reflection of an imaginative mind—and by a happy knack of making the past alive and picturesque. These books were : ' Traces of the British Church in Somerset ', 1910 ; ' The Cathedral of the Moor—North Curry Church ', 1930 ; ' The Saxon Conquest of Somerset ', 1933 ; ' Early Christianity in Somerset ', 1935. He also contributed a paper to *Proceedings* of the Somerset Archæological Society : ' Thomas Chard, D.D. : last Abbot of Ford ', vol. lxxiii [1927], pp. 29–34.

Cultured and observant, handy alike with pencil and pen, Pring possessed, together with a retentive memory, the mind of a chronicler. His personal tradition derived from an age of enlightened mutual improvement, in a narrow, leisurely, and self-

centred provincial community ; to this he owed his bonhomie and genius for friendship. In his retirement at Ilminster he delighted to forgather with old friends and share with them his reminiscences of much which is being rapidly replaced by specialization, and by the mechanized outlook of an age of transition.

A lover and reconstructor of the vanished, and vanishing, past, he did valuable service ; and his contributions to the cultured pursuits of antiquity, together with the memory of his personal charm, will hold a permanent place in the estimation of his friends.

J. D. GEDGE



ROBERT NEVILLE GRENVILLE

Alfred Jewson, Photographer, Glastonbury

R. Neville Grenville, D.L., C.A.

(Plate XIX)

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Mr. Robert Neville Grenville, Squire of Butleigh, as he was always called, of Butleigh Court, Glastonbury, died on 13 September 1936 in his ninetieth year. A correspondent writes :—

The squire was a man of varied attainments and hobbies, and a beloved figure in the county where he spent his busy life. The Butleigh estate came into the Neville family through James Grenville, Lord Glastonbury, who died unmarried and left it to his first cousin, Thomas Grenville, for life, with remainder to the Very Rev. the Hon. George Neville, Dean of Windsor, son of Catherine Grenville, who married Richard Neville, Lord Braybrooke of Audley End. The Dean was grandfather of the late squire.

' Bob ' Neville, afterwards Neville Grenville, who was born on 16 December 1846, went to Eton in 1858 and was in Evans's house. He went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where the Lords Braybrooke are hereditary visitors and patrons of the Mastership. One of his favourite stories related to his instructing his University examiners in the practical construction and running of a steamboat on the Cam, his ' Puffing Billy ' being virtually of his own construction. Long before the days of the motor-car he designed and built a steam road car, the engine of which was still doing stationary duty in his workshop a few years ago. At one time he owned a fine steam yacht and held a master's certificate. He was particularly fond of cruising in the Baltic and the Norwegian fjords, and at times in the Mediterranean. He was the deft inventor of many interesting and ingenious gadgets for household and other uses. He was apprenticed to Messrs. Easton and Anderson, engineers, of London, and railways became his hobby, particularly the development of the Great Western Railway. He had the run of the railway shops at Swindon, enjoyed working on the footplate, and was proud of a fine model and photograph of the ' Butleigh Court ' locomotive, designed by his friend Churchward.

In 1870 he joined the West Somerset Yeomanry and retired as captain in 1884. He was High Sheriff of Somerset in 1900. The Somerset Catchment Board was constituted in 1876, with the squire as its first chairman, a post held by him until his death. He was one of the original trustees of Glastonbury Abbey, and rebelled against restorations supported only by sentimental or fanciful evidences. Forestry was another of his hobbies. Through his park at Butleigh he cut rides so that Wells Cathedral, Glastonbury Abbey, and the churches of West Pennard and Baltonsborough, the advowsons of which were his, were brought into view from his study. He loved his own church of St. Leonard, Butleigh, adjoining his house, and recently repaired its tower and bells at his own expense. The squire set up a cider press, the product of which had a wide reputation. He set up also a successful trout fishery near Butleigh, from which he helped to stock the Blagdon Lake.

He owned the interesting medieval Tribunal at Glastonbury, the admirable restoration of which by the Office of Works became possible by his generosity. The ancient tower on Glastonbury Tor was also his property and, had the entail permitted, he would have presented that also to the National Trust. A scheme, to which he was a party, is now on foot for its purchase for the nation, a fitting memorial to a Somerset man of such charm, public spirit, and distinction. His wife, who died recently in her eighty-sixth year, had no less charm and fine character. The household was one in which morning and evening prayers were reverently maintained, and it was a custom of the house also to preface every meal by a toast to the King.